

Exhibit No. 3Date 2-9-07Bill No. SB 288

## Testimony on SB 288

Revising requirements for private alternative adolescent or outdoor  
residential programs

Mr. Chair and Members of the committee, my name is Joan-Nell  
Macfadden, I live at 2620 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. South in Great Falls. 452-4188

I would like to speak in support of SB 288. I have been a mental health  
advocate for 30 years\*. Having a school or outdoor program for adolescents  
that is not licensed, does not do background checks on their employees, or  
have outside oversight is absolutely unconscionable to me.

There is no doubt, in my mind, that most of these programs feel they are  
doing an excellent job - and, they may be. However, it is very easy to run  
under the radar when a majority of your students are from out of state. In  
my opinion, anyone who provides care to children 24 hours a day needs  
oversight, particularly when their focus is on reforming youth. It is not  
enough to say, "We hold ourselves accountable."

The present oversight board needs to be expanded. Having a majority of the  
members from the same county, though they may be good members, is  
suspect. As we say, it's a little like, "The Fox Guarding the Hen House."

Please vote yes on SB 288, it is sound, well thought out legislation that  
meets the need of protecting all children who are receiving care in Montana.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**\*Past Advocacy Positions:**

Montana Committee for Emotionally Disturbed Children, Member  
State Family Services Advisory Council, Chair  
Mental Health Managed Care Oversight, Member  
Great Falls Local Oversight Advisory Council (Chair)  
Central Service Area Authority, Member  
Mental Health Oversight Advisory Council, Member  
Mental Health Association of Montana Board, President  
National Mental Health Association Board, Member